

The History of Keep Charleston Beautiful

Today, Keep Charleston Beautiful, formerly the Clean City Commission, focuses on preventing litter before it happens. Historically, the Commission worked to reform sanitation ordinances and create an environmental court.

1977-1985

In 1977, Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. organized the Charleston Clean City Commission as an affiliate of the Keep America Beautiful Clean Communities Program. During its first decade, the Commission focused on instituting better procedures for the enforcement of environmental ordinances. The Commission worked closely with the Sanitation Division (now Environmental Services Division) to improve trash and garbage pickup scheduling and efficiency. In addition to strengthening enforcement of environmental ordinances, the Commission created Clean City Clara, a pelican mascot, to use in educational programs. Clara visited students throughout Charleston and encouraged them to live litter-free lives. The early work of the Commission also focused on large-scale cleanups.

Important Events:

1982-Clean City Commission helps revise the Environmental Code of the City of Charleston.

1983-Clean City Commission initiated a citywide cleanup event called the Clean City Sweep. Clara debuts.

1984-Commission worked with City Council to create an Environmental Court.

1985-1995

The focus of the Commission shifted to education and community outreach. The Commission's mascot, Clean City Clara, grew in popularity. She was portrayed by a series of volunteers including Ann Andrus, Iona Sanders, The Back Porch Storytellers, and Mary and Moose Moyers. The Clean City Commission continued to sponsor an annual citywide cleanup called the Glad-Bag-a-Thon. They recruited the assistance of Citadel cadets, area businesses, neighborhoods, and schools to clean up the City of Charleston. As a result of their work with education, cleanup, and the ongoing support of enforcement activities, the Commission won several awards during this period.

AWARDS & Important Events:

1986-Palmetto Citation of Excellence

1987-Take Pride in America National Award

1988-Charleston Pride Board community award

1992-The Story of Clara, a book about how Clean City Clara helps kids prevent litter, produced by the Commission.

1996-2004

In the late 1990's and early 2000's, the Commission focused on addressing specific environmental concerns including dog litter, cigarette litter, and neighborhood cleanliness and beautification. The Coordinator of the Commission was an authorized code enforcement officer. The Commission was working to increase the public's awareness of environmental ordinances and compliance with the ordinances.

The Commission continued to organize a major cleanup each spring as part of the Great American Cleanup sponsored by Keep America Beautiful. The Commission won two major awards for its participation in this program. In 1998 the Commission won First Place Municipal Program in South Carolina and First Place Municipal Cleanup in the United States in 1999.

Clean City Clara continued to visit schools and to teach children how to stop litter. The new group of volunteers included the Charleston Southern Women's Basketball team, Johnson & Wales Future Business Leaders of America, and College of Charleston Masters of Environmental Sciences Student Association.

AWARDS:

1998-Commission wins First Place Cleanup Program in South Carolina

1999-Commission wins First Place Cleanup Program in the United States

2003-Commission wins First Place Litter Prevention Program in South Carolina

2005-2010

In 2005 the Clean City Commission changed its name to Keep Charleston Beautiful (KCB). Along with the name change the commission continued to evolve to meet the needs of the community.

Clean City Clara continues to visit local schools. Clara saw over 3,000 students during the 2008-2009 school year and in the spring of 2009 was awarded Keep South Carolina Beautiful's Program of the Year.

Clean Up After Your Pet and My City is NOT Your Ashtray have gained community support over the years. There are over 65 dog waste bag dispensers installed in over 20 City parks. These dispensers are maintained through the help of community sponsors. In 2009 the community used over 300,000 dog waste bags provided in these dispensers.

Though KCB still works to increase the public's awareness of local ordinances the Coordinator of KCB is a no longer an authorized code enforcement officer. KCB focuses on education, awareness and action. However, Keep Charleston Beautiful still maintains a close relationship with the Livability Court. In the summer of 2010 KCB was moved under the City of Charleston's new Livability Division.

In October of 2009 KCB kicked off its Green Spaces Recycling program placing 25 recycling bins in City Parks. The first four parks to get bins were Marion Square, Hampton Park, White Point Garden, and Waterfront Park.

In 2010 a new program, Charleston Friendly Yards, will be introduced. This program focuses on the encouragement of sustainable environmentally aware yards and gardens.

Spring of 2010, KCB was awarded a \$10,000 grant from The UPS Foundation to further expand the Green Spaces: Parks Recycling program.

AWARDS:

2005- Keep South Carolina Beautiful Program of the Year, My City in NOT Your Ashtray

2006- Keep America Beautiful President's Circle Recognition Award

2007- Keep America Beautiful Innovation Award, Dash for Trash

2008- Keep America Beautiful President's Circle Recognition Award

2009- Keep America Beautiful Affiliate Award, Distinguished Service Citation

2009- Keep South Carolina Beautiful Outstanding Performance Award, Program of the Year Clean City Clara

2009- Keep America Beautiful President's Circle Recognition Award

2010- Carolina Recycling Association Getting the Word Out: Sensational Education and Outreach Award

2010- Keep America Beautiful President's Circle Recognition Award

2010- KAB & USDA People's Garden recognition

2010- Keep SC Beautiful Gold Level Affiliate Recognition Award

2011-Present

In 2011 KCB won a \$2,000 grant from Keep America Beautiful to help build vertical gardens at the Elliottborough Park, \$8,000 from PalmettoPride for education and volunteer programs, and a \$10,000 grant from Waste Management to expand the Green Spaces Recycling Program in City Parks. In 2012 KCB was awarded \$2,000 from the CLPP grant to help reduce cigarette related litter on the Municipal Golf Course and \$1,000 from UPS to help with community murals. Grants continue to be the main source of funding for KCB.

AWARDS:

2011- Keep America Beautiful Affiliate Award, 1st place

2011- Keep America Beautiful President's Circle Recognition Award

2011- Keep SC Beautiful Affiliate Recognition Award- Gold Level

2012- Keep America Beautiful's President Circle Recognition